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VERONICA HEDERIFOLIA (SCROPHULARIACEAE): NEW FOR THE FLORA OF TEXAS

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ABSTRACT

Veronica hederifolia is reported new for Texas from a residential lawn in Greenville, Hunt County, on the eastern edge of north-central Texas. Cotyledons were noted in early February with flowering first observed on 4 March 2013. This brings the number of species in this largely Old World genus in Texas to eight, five of which occur as lawn weeds.

KEY WORDS: Scrophulariaceae, *Veronica*, Texas, Hunt County, adventive.

In late January and early February 2013 tiny cotyledons of an unfamiliar species of *Veronica* with conspicuous white hairs on the leaves began sprouting in bare spots in the front lawn of a residence in Greenville, Hunt Co., Texas. Despite regular visits I did not observe the population in flower until 4 March 2013—and this after the entire front yard had been mowed a couple of days earlier. Additional taller individuals, missed by the lawn-mower, were found in the backyard that day, from which the specimens were taken two days later. The plants are *Veronica hederifolia* L., previously unknown in the Texas flora.

Voucher: **Texas.** Hunt Co.: Lawn weed, 5405 Kay Way, Greenville, 33° 06' 53.88 N, 96° 06' 21.12" W, 6 Mar 2013, *White s.n.* (BAYLU). Figure 1.

The ongoing drought and a lack of supplemental water for the past two years nearly eliminated the St. Augustine turf in the front lawn at the site. Consequently *Veronica hederifolia* cotyledons almost completely filled several bares spot in full sun; associates included *Veronica polita*, *Stellaria meadia*, and *Lamium amplexicaule*. By contrast the population in the back yard was growing in shade among an old untended planting of *Vinca minor*. A walking tour of the neighborhood on 9 March revealed the species to be present in numerous nearby lawns (though no additional specimens were taken).

Native to Eurasia, *Veronica hederifolia* is an erect or decumbent annual (Radford et al. 1968) that is well-established in North America. It is most densely distributed from New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania south through eastern Virginia and eastern North Carolina although it has been collected sporadically in almost every state in the eastern USA west to the eastern edge of the Great Plains. It also is known on the West Coast from British Columbia south through California with a few records from Utah (BONAP 2013; USDA, NRCS 2013). Although there are records from Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana, there are no previous reports in the literature of the species in Texas. Additional records should be sought elsewhere in the eastern half of the state and botanists and plant enthusiasts should be on the alert for the species.

According to BONAP (2013), seven species of *Veronica* are previously known to occur in Texas—four of which are blue- or blue and white-flowered weedy invaders from Eurasia that grow in waste places, fields, and lawns (*V. agrestis* L., *V. arvensis* L., *V. persica* Poir., and *V. polita* Fries). *Veronica hederifolia* grows in similar habitats but is easily distinguished from these by the tiny pale lavender flowers which are nearly the same size as those of *V. polita* and have conspicuous purple

lines on the petals. From a distance, the leaves bear a superficial resemblance to those of *Lamium amplexicaule* but are easily distinguished from that species by the conspicuous white hairs, which also cover the calyx. (pers. obs.).

Figure 1. *Veronica hederifolia* from Hunt Co., Texas. Photos 6 March 2013.

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